

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An online service providing system,
comprising:

a terminal equipment of a user requesting a
service;

a computer installed at each of a plurality of
service points offering services; and

a distributor device intervening via a network
between the terminal equipment and the computers to pass
the service request from the terminal equipment to one
of the computers, wherein the distributor device
includes:

first storage means for storing information
regarding each user;

second storage means for storing a service
time zone of each service point;

means for referring to, when a service request
is received from a user, the first storage means and for
determining whether or not the user is authorized to
receive a service offered;

means for referring to the second storage
means and for selecting one of the service points
currently in the service time zone when the user is
authorized; and

means for relaying communication between the
terminal equipment and the service point selected.

2. An online service providing system according
to claim 1, wherein the service time zones of a

plurality of service points allow a 24-hour continuous service.

3. An online service providing system according to claim 1, wherein:

the first storage means stores a call identifier of each user associated with the terminal equipment; and

the distributor device determines, when receiving a call from the terminal equipment, whether or not a call identifier received from a network is beforehand registered to the first storage means and uses a result of the determination as one condition for determining an access authorization level of the user.

4. An online service providing system according to claim 1, wherein:

when a service time zone of a first service point directly succeeds a service time zone of a second service point, the first service point transfers data updated by the first service point to the second service point by when the service of the first service point is replaced with the service of the second service point and also transfers a transaction received by the first service point to the second service point.

5. A distributor device for use with an online service providing system for selecting, when a service request is received from an external device, one of a plurality of service points offering services and for passing the request thereto, comprising:

storage means for storing a service time zone of each service point;

means for referring to the storage means and for selecting one of the service points currently in the service time zone; and

means for relaying the service request to the service point selected.

6. A distributor device for use with an online service providing system according to claim 5, wherein the service time zones of a plurality of service points allow a 24-hour continuous service.

7. A distributor device for use with an online service providing system according to claim 5, further including:

second storage means for registering a call identifier; and

means for controlling, when a call identifier of an originator of the service request is beforehand registered to the second storage, operation of relaying the service request to a service point.

8. A distributor device for use with an online service providing system according to claim 5, wherein the storage means stores a service time zone and a service type of each service point, the device further including means for referring to the storage means and selecting one of the service points which matches in a service type with the service request and which is currently in the service time zone.

9. A storage medium for storing a program, wherein the program instructs a computer to execute functions including:

a function to receive a service request from an external device;

a function to refer to storage means storing a service time zone of each of a plurality of service points offering services and to select one of service points currently in a service time zone; and

a function to send the service request to the service point selected.

10. A storage medium for storing a program according to claim 9, wherein:

the storage means stores a service time zone and a service type of each service point; and

the program includes a function to refer to the storage means to select one of the service points which matches in a service type with the service request and which is currently in the service time zone.

11. A service providing method in which when a service request is received from an external device, one of a plurality of service points offering services is selected and the service request is transferred to the service point selected, comprising the steps of:

storing a service time zone of each service point in storage means;

referring to the storage means and selecting one of service points currently in a service time zone;

and

relaying the service request to the service point selected.

12. Service providing method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of

storing a call identifier in storage means, wherein the service request is relayed to a service point when a call identifier of an originator of the service request is beforehand registered to the storage means.

13. A service providing method in which when a service request is received from terminal equipment, the service request is transferred to a service point offering services, comprising the steps of:

storing, in storage means, a call identifier of each user associated with the terminal equipment and a service type available for the user with a correspondence established therebetween;

determining the service type according to a call identifier received in association with a service request from the terminal equipment; and

relaying the service request to a service point associated with the service type.